LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-36. (canceled)

37. (currently amended) A method for producing a circular weft knitted tubular fabric on a circular weft knitting machine, comprising steps of:

drawing ~~wherein a continuous yarn material (4, 7) is fed into a knitting point (16) of the knitting machine and pressed into loops (1) at the knitting point, and wherein the yarn material (4, 7) is obtained such that~~ a continuous fiber band (5) ~~is at first drawn~~ in a drawing ~~drafting~~ device (14) to obtain a drawn continuous fiber band (5);

twisting the drawn continuous fiber band (5) supplied from the drawing device (14) ~~and then provided with twists~~ in a spinning device (22, 23; 26, 29) to continuously obtain a yarn material (4, 7) at an outlet end (24, 30) of the spinning device (22, 23; 26, 29);

feeding the yarn material (4, 7) obtained at the outlet end (24, 30) of the spinning device (22, 23; 26, 29) directly into a knitting point (16) of the circular weft knitting machine; and

forming loops (1) with the yarn material (4, 7) at the knitting point for producing the circular weft knitted tubular fabric without unwinding the yarn material (4, 7) from a

supply bobbin~~and that the fiber material (4,7) thus produced is directly fed into a knitting point (16)~~.

38. (previously presented) The method according to claim 37, wherein said fiber band (5) is spun in the spinning device (20, 23) into an unconventional yarn (21) and is processed in this state into loops.

39. (previously presented) The method according to claim 38, wherein a strength is given to the yarn (21) by means of the spinning process which strength suffices for its transport from the drawing device (14) to the knitting point (16).

40. (previously presented) The method according to claim 37, wherein the fiber band (5) is spun in the spinning device (26, 29) into a temporary yarn (25) having typical twists, is transported in this state to the knitting point (16) and is then, before it is processed into loops, changed back into an untwisted fiber web (32) by a false twist effect.

41. (previously presented) The method according to claim 40, wherein a yarn guide (30) is provided between the spinning device (26, 29) and the knitting point (16) and the temporary yarn (25) is left to itself between the yarn guide (30) and the knitting point (16).

42. (previously presented) The method according to claim 37, wherein the yarn material, before the beginning of a knitting process, is placed by suction transversely over a path to be described by needles (17) of the knitting machine and is retained in this position, and wherein the knitting process is then begun by moving the needles (17) along the path and raising them to receive the yarn material.

43. (previously presented) The method according to claim 42, wherein an end of the yarn material (4, 7) retained by suction is cut off at the latest after the beginning of raising the needles (17).

44. (previously presented) The method according to claim 37, wherein a yarn material (7) is used, the fiber web (5) of which is provided with an additional auxiliary yarn (8).

45. (previously presented) The method according to claim 44, wherein the knitting process is started in that firstly the auxiliary yarn (8) alone is processed into loops until the knitted fabric has a pre-selected length, and then the yarn material (7) comprising the fiber web (5) auxiliary yarn (8) is processed into loops.

46. (currently amended) An apparatus for producing a circular weft knitted tubular fabric, comprising:

a circular weft knitting machine comprising having knitting needles (17) and at least one knitting point (16) configured to form ~~for processing a continuous yarn material~~

~~(4, 7) fed to it into~~ loops (1) from a continuous ~~and a means for feeding the~~ yarn material (4, 7);

~~, wherein feeding means contains~~ drawing equipment (14) configured to draw an ~~for drawing and~~ endless fiber band (5); and

a spinning device (22, 23; 26, 29) configured to receive the fiber band from the drawing equipment (14), to twist the fiber band (5) for the formation of the continuous yarn material (4, 7) to the at least one ~~located between the drawing equipment (14) and the~~ knitting point (16) for directly knitting the circular weft knitted tubular fabric with the yarn material (4, 7) delivered from the spinning device (22, 23; 26, 29)~~and serving for providing the fiber band (5) with twists~~.

47. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein a yarn guide (15, 24, 30) is disposed between the drawing equipment (14) and the knitting point (16).

48. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein a suction element (18) is disposed on a backside of the needles (17).

49. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein the spinning device is arranged to produce an unconventional yarn (21) and comprises a spinning element (22) and a spinning and transport pipe (29) connected thereto and ending at a yarn guide (24) or the knitting point (16).

50. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein the spinning device is arranged to produce a temporary yarn (25) and comprises at least one twisting element (26) and a spinning and transport pipe (29) connected thereto and ending at a yarn guide (30) or the knitting point (16).

51. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 50, wherein the twisting element (26) is operable with air pressure.

52. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 50, wherein the spinning device comprises a plurality of spinning sections, each spinning section containing a twisting element (26a, 26b, 26c) and a spinning and transport pipe (29) connected thereto, wherein the last spinning and transport pipe (29) in a direction of the transport of the fiber band ends at the yarn guide (24, 30) or the knitting point (16).

53. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 52, wherein the twisting elements (26a, 26b, 26c) are operated with air pressure, a central twisting element (26b) being operated at a highest air pressure, a twisting element (26a) close to the drawing equipment (14) at a lowest air pressure, and a twisting element (26c) close to the yarn guide (30) at an average air pressure.

54. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 52, wherein the twisting element close to the drawing equipment (14) and the central twisting element (26a, 26b, 26c) can be stopped after spinning of the temporary yarn (25) has started.

55. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 49, wherein a ventilation opening (34) is assigned to at least one spinning and transport pipe (29).

56. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, further comprising a means for supplying an auxiliary yarn (8) to the yarn material (7).

57. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 56, wherein the means for supplying an auxiliary yarn comprises a supply pipe (34) which is disposed in front of delivery rollers (12) of the drawing equipment (14) and supplies the auxiliary yarn (8) to the spinning device.

58. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein the knitting machine is a circular knitting machine, at the circumference of which a plurality of drawing equipment is disposed.

59. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 58, wherein the plurality of drawing equipment are combined into groups (14.1 to 14.3) and dead zones (39) free of active knitting points (16) are provided at the circumference of the circular knitting machine.

60. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 48, wherein a separating device (48) is assigned to the suction element (18).

61. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein a can (38) filled with a roving is assigned to the drawing equipment (14) and a transport mechanism (43) for the roving is provided between the can (38) and the drawing equipment (14).

62. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 57, wherein a yarn feeding means (45) is disposed between the supply pipe (34) and a supply spool (46) for the auxiliary yarn (8).

63. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 62, wherein the yarn feeding means (45) has a pressure roller (51) and a drive roller (52) provided with a free wheel (54).

64. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 63, wherein the drive roller (52) is actuated at a lower circumferential speed than the delivery rollers (12).